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July 3, 2006

To: Mayor Michael D. Antonovich
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chair Pro Tem
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Yvonne Burke
Supervisor Don Knabe

From: David Sanders, Ph.D. 
Director

**DECEMBER 6, 2005 BOARD AGENDA ITEM #16 RE: MISSING CHILDREN
MONTHLY UPDATE**

On December 6, 2005, your Board directed the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to reconvene the Missing Children Task Force in order to continue in the identification and refinement of practices for the prevention and recovery of runaways; and to report back on a monthly basis with status updates on the following:

- I. Existing Countywide and community-specific services and programs, including the support that the DCFS Emergency Response Command Post can provide;
- II. Improved maintenance of the DCFS Missing Children Website;
- III. Enhancement of the DCFS Child Protection Hotline to provide specialized support for runaways;
- IV. Consideration of using the Permanency Partners Program (P-3), and;
- V. Addressing the issues that have been raised by youth who have been or are in care of the Department through corrections and modifications to the Department's policy.

UPDATES

As noted in a prior Board communication, the Abducted & Runaway Foster Childrens Systems (ARKs) data base training was in the planning stages. As of June 28, 2006, all regional office training has been completed. Presently, per office, the Department has three individuals trained in ARKs data entry protocol.

This strategic training will ensure the input and extraction of information that should occur upon each runaway episode or recall. Additionally, it will allow for enhanced management of each regional office's Runaway population.

The Runaway Adolescent Program (RAP) continues to conduct analysis on the overall Runaway population. Currently 50% of the Runaway population in 14 offices have been completed. As previously stated, the data continues to show youth that has histories of substance abuse, multiple runs, and mental health interactions. The information thus far gathered has been shared with Regional Administrators in an effort to assist with individual office strategies. Upon completion of analysis for all offices, comprehensive information will be detailed in forthcoming report.

CURRENT STATUS

I. Existing County-wide and community-specific services and programs, including the support that the DCFS Emergency Response Command Post:

The Department's Emergency Response Command Post maintains its procedures by which to monitor for runaway youth. The division also continues to document specific information on that population for use in regionally based Team Decision-Making (TDM) conferences.

II. Improved maintenance of the DCFS Missing Children Web site:

Through task force discussion and sub-committee work the Department is looking at recommendations which further define the Runaway population. Based on the information that has been entered into ARKs since December 2005, we are beginning to see trends. Those trends inform us of various sub-populations including substance abusers, multiple runners and pregnant teens. Part of the rationale for redefining Runaways would include acknowledgement of undesirable but straightforward circumstances of sub-groups, which allow us an improved opportunity to tailor strategies and services.

To further expound, the task force has discussed the variance among substance abusers. For example, we have multiple case file notations of youth that have engaged in marijuana usage and we have information on youth that use methamphetamines. While they are both illegal substances the intervention strategies for each would vary greatly. We have also noted a group of youth that are multiple runners. This group too may be subdivided. There are those youth that feel "stability" in a placement that the Department may not legally sanction, and there are those youth who believe they are adult enough to live either on their own and/or with a partner – each grouping repeatedly runs back to the unsanctioned placement. We also have information on

youth that have had multiple mental health interactions. However, a mental health interaction may denote a youth that has been hospitalized or a youth that has been seen by a mental health professional and prescribed medication(s). Each scenario would dictate different and perhaps multiple strategies. We will continue discussion and analysis and put forth additional strategies at a later date.

III. Enhancement of the DCFS Child Protection Hotline to provide specialized support for runaways:

The Department, through task force recommendation, via the Law Enforcement sub-committee, has begun to liaison with the State in an effort to appropriately note Runaway youth that have been missing for an extended, consecutive amount of time. Through interface with the State we will have an enhanced ability to connect with other city, county, and state jurisdictions. This action also allows us additional collaborative partnerships through which we may locate Runaways.

IV. Consideration of using the Permanency Partners Program (P-3):

As outlined in the March 1, 2006 Board report, all runaways are now referred to P-3 staff. A follow-up report will be made to your Board upon any changes regarding this initiative.

V. Addressing the issues that have been raised by youth who have been or are in care of the Department through corrections and modifications to the Department's policy.

The Youth Concerns sub-committee continues to meet independent of the Task Force. However, to-date, no further recommendations have been forwarded for the Department to act upon. Nonetheless, we remain committed to their previous recommendations of 1) Identifying a means of tracking repeat runaways, and 2) Allowing flexibility in placement to allow for a more normal experience. The Department values the input of this sub-committee and will continue to encourage and engage their on-going participation.

CONCLUSION

DCFS will continue its work to further comprehend and appropriately service the Runaway population and its sub-groups and to ultimately decrease this population through the use of permanency strategies. While we continue to achieve successes through our use of P-3 workers and use of TDM conferences, we are cognizant of the

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additional work and will continue implementing the recommendations forwarded by the task force and its sub-committees.

If you have any questions or need further assistance, please contact me, or your staff may contact Helen Berberian, Board Relations Manager at (213) 351-5530.

DS:AS:cm

Attachment

c: Chief Administrative Office
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors

Abducted & Runaway Foster Childrens System (ARKS)
DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON RUNAWAY CHILDREN SERVICED BY DCFS
July 5, 2006

Category	Totals / Subtotal	Percent	Comments
Runaway DCFS Foster Children as reported in ARKS System	450		
Age			
0-9 years old	0	0%	
10-13 years old	25	6%	
14-17 years old	425	94%	Majority are teenagers 14-17
	450		
Gender			
Female	322	72%	More girls than boys runaway
Male	128	28%	
	450		
Ethnicity			
American Indian	3	1%	
Black	125	28%	
Asian/Pacific Islander	11	2%	
Hispanic/Latino	250	56%	
White	61	14%	
	450		
Placement Type			
Foster Home	203	45%	
Group Home	152	34%	
Relative/Guardian Home	89	20%	
(Not Indicated)	6	1%	
	450		
Location of CSW			
SPA 1 Lancaster	10	2%	
SPA 1 Palmdale	18	4%	
SPA 2 North Hollywood	30	7%	
SPA 2 Santa Clarita	11	2%	
SPA 3 El Monte	1	0%	
SPA 3 Glendora	40	9%	
SPA 3 Pasadena	14	3%	
SPA 3 Pomona	20	4%	
SPA 4 Metro North	45	10%	
SPA 5 West Los Angeles	17	4%	
SPA 6 Century	21	7%	
SPA 6 Compton	25	6%	
SPA 6 Hawthorne	9	2%	
SPA 6 Wateridge	43	10%	
SPA 7 Belvedere	39	9%	
SPA 7 Santa Fe Springs	35	8%	
SPA 8 Lakewood	34	8%	
SPA 8 Torrance	19	4%	
Adoptions	4	1%	
Specialized Programs	15	3%	
(Not Indicated)	0	0%	
	450		